

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179080

FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 11129 ACTION SECSTATE INFO PRETORIA,
LUSAKA,MAPUTO, DAR ES SALAAM, LAGOS, GABORONE, LILONGWE,
AND USUN NEW YORK DATED JULY 14, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 11129

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV UK RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: JOHN DAVIES BRIEFING

SUMMARY: CONSERVATIVE SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVIES
HAS CONCLUDED FROM HIS VISIT TO ZAMBIA AND RHODESIA THAT
(A) THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WILL FAIL UNLESS THE EXECU-
TIVE COUNCIL MOVES MORE URGENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY, AND
UNLESS IT RECEIVES SOME FORM OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP"
FROM OUTSIDE; (B) NKOMO MIGHT STILL BE ENTICED BACK TO
SALISBURY WITH SUFFICIENT GUARANTEES ABOUT HIS POST-
INDEPENDENCE POSITION; (C) THE ECONOMY IN RHODESIA IS IN
BAD BUT NOT DESPERATE CONDITION; AND (D) ALTHOUGH THE
SECURITY SITUATION IS DETERIORATING, THE SALISBURY
GOVERNMENT MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE A CREDIBLE
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ELECTION. DAVIES SAID THAT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY WILL
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SANCTIONS IF THERE REMAINS A CHANCE
OF A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT, BUT IF THAT CHANCE FADES AND
IF THE SALISBURY GROUP IS CLEARLY MOVING TO AN ELECTION,
THEN CONSERVATIVES WILL VOTE AGAINST AN EXTENSION OF
SANCTIONS WHEN THE ISSUE COMES BEFORE PARLIAMENT IN
NOVEMBER. FINALLY, DAVIES INQUIRED ABOUT THE PROGRESS

OF THE HELMS AMENDMENT WHICH, IF PASSED, DAVIES SAID, WOULD PUT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE TORY LEADERSHIP NOT TO PERMIT THE US SENATE TO GET OUT IN FRONT OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY ON THE ISSUE OF SANCTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. CONSERVATIVE SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY JOHN DAVIES BRIEFED EMBASSY OFFICERS JULY 13 ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO ZAMBIA AND RHODESIA. WHILE THIS MEETING WITH KAUNDA WAS CORDIAL, DAVIES SAID HE FOUND THE ZAMBIAN UNQUESTIONING IN HIS COMPLETE SUPPORT OF JOSHUA NKOMO. KAUNDA SAID ZAMBIA WAS WILLING TO PAY WHATEVER PRICE IS NECESSARY, INCLUDING THE ECONOMIC DEBILITATION OF HIS COUNTRY, TO ASSURE NKOMO'S SUCCESS IN OVERTHROWING SMITH.

2. DAVIES FOUND NKOMO FRIENDLY BUT UNCOMPROMISING. THE ZAPU LEADER SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT THINGS WERE GOING HIS WAY, AND WHILE HE DID NOT WISH TO FETTER CLOSE ANY OPTION, HE SAW NO REASON TO NEGOTIATE ON ANYONE'S TERMS BUT HIS OWN. REFERRING TO THE INTERNAL LEADERS, NKOMO ONLY SAID, "THEY HAVE NOT MADE ME A PROPOSAL."

3. DAVIES SAID HE WENT TO SALISBURY TO FIND THE ANSWERS TO FOUR QUESTIONS:

A) CAN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SURVIVE? DAVIES CONCLUDED THAT IF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CONTINUES AT ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESENT DILATORY PACE, WITHOUT SOME INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, THE SETTLEMENT WILL FAIL. AND THE CONSEQUENCE WILL BE DISMAL, HE ADDED, WITH SMITH RESUMING POWER AND THE WAR GRINDING ON. DAVIES TOLD THE COUNCIL LEADERS, IN THE STRONGEST TERMS, THAT THEY WERE "MAKING A MESS" OF THEIR AGREEMENT AND URGED THEM TO MOVE FORWARD QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY. IF THE SALISBURY COUNCIL RESPONDED GENUINELY, DAVIES TOLD THEM, THEN A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT HERE WOULD BE PREPARED TO OFFER "PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP" SUCH AS A SENIOR DIPLOMATIC MISSION, CONSTITUTIONAL ADVICE, AND OBSERVERS AT THE POLLS.

B) IS THERE ROOM FOR COMPROMISE? WHILE DISCOURAGED BY HIS TALKS IN LUSAKA, DAVIES SAID HE REMAINED CONVINCED THAT NKOMO IS THE KEY TO A STABLE SETTLEMENT. HE URGED SMITH TO OFFER NKOMO SOME FORM OF GUARANTEE (THE PRESIDENCY OF ZIMBABWE) TO ENTICE HIM BACK TO SALISBURY. AN ELECTION WOULD STILL BE IMPORTANT, BUT AN NKOMO-SITHOLE ALLIANCE WOULD LIKELY WIN (DAVIES SAID HE HEARD FROM EVERY QUARTER THAT MUZOREWA IS A "HOPELESS" POLITICIAN).

C) CAN THE ECONOMY CONTINUE? DAVIES SAID HE WAS SURPRISED AT THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE RHODESIAN

ECONOMY. THE POOR STATE OF THE ECONOMY HAS BEEN EXAGGERATED -- IT IS BAD BUT NOT DESPERATE. DAVIES CONCLUDED THE ECONOMY CAN CONTINUE TO FUNCTION SATISFACTORILY OVER THE NEAR TERM.

D) IS SECURITY COLLAPSING? DAVIES SAID THERE IS AN INCREASE OF INTIMIDATION IN THE COUNTRY. IN OUTLYING

AREAS, THE SECURITY SITUATION IS DETERIORATING, BUT THE RDF REMAINS IN EFFECTIVE GENERAL CONTROL. DAVIES CONCLUDED THAT THE SALISBURY GOVERNMENT WOULD NARROWLY BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE AN ELECTION. BECAUSE OF INTIMIDATION (FROM BOTH SIDES), HOWEVER, NEUTRAL OBSERVERS WOULD BE NECESSARY.

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4. AT THE END OF HIS BRIEFING, DAVIES SAID HE CAME AWAY FROM RHODESIA BELIEVING WE WILL SOON FACE A CHOICE BETWEEN WATCHING A "SHOOT-OUT" IN THE COUNTRY OR HELPING WHAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED. SO LONG AS THERE IS A REMOTE CHANCE OF COMPROMISE WITH NKOMO, THEN HE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SANCTIONS AND ADVISE THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY ACCORDINGLY. IF THERE SEEMS NO CHANCE OF COMPROMISE, HOWEVER, AND IF THE SALISBURY GOVERNMENT IS CLEARLY MOVING TOWARDS A GENUINE ELECTION, THEN CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT FOR SANCTIONS WOULD VANISH. AND IF THE TORIES WERE IN POWER HERE, DAVIES PREDICTED, IT IS UNLIKELY SANCTIONS WOULD BE EXTENDED WHEN THE QUESTION COMES TO ITS ANNUAL VOTE IN PARLIAMENT THIS NOVEMBER.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, DAVIES SAID THAT IF THE US SENATE PASSED THE HELMS AMENDMENT (AND EVEN IF IT FAILED TO BECOME LAW), PRESSURE IN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO TAKE A SIMILAR OFFICIAL POSITION WOULD BE IRRESISTIBLE. BY STEALING THE MARCH ON THE TORIES HERE, THE SENATE ACTION WOULD PUT THE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP NECESSARILY IN THE POSITION OF HAVING TO DECLARE NOW THAT IT ALSO SUPPORTS THE END OF SANCTIONS. DAVIES MADE IT CLEAR HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE FORCED INTO THIS CORNER, BUT HE MADE IT EQUALLY CLEAR THAT BACKBENCH SENTIMENT IN SUPPORT OF SALISBURY IS RUNNING HIGH.

BREWSTER UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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